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Viewing cable 07MANAGUA1880, AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 6 MEETING WITH EDUARDO

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- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07MANAGUA1880**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07MANAGUA1880	2007-08-09 18:14	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCOR](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 6 MEETING WITH EDUARDO
MONTEALEGRE

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Trivelli, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

Summary

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met with Eduardo Montealegre leader of Nicaragua's Liberal Alliance (ALN) at Montealegre's request on August 6. Montealegre expressed his doubts about the possibilities of forming a strategic liberal alliance with Liberal Constitutional Party of Nicaragua (PLC) before the 2008 municipal elections. He suggested that the best way forward was to work with the PLC one issue at a time. First and foremost, on Montealegre's list is working with the PLC to fight the Ortega government's efforts to establish Citizens, Councils (CPCs - Consejos del Poder Ciudadano). Montealegre complained about the lack of financial resources to support democratic change in Nicaragua, and openly wondered how much longer he should continue to invest personally in the party. That said, he did not categorically dismiss the possibility that he might stand as a candidate for the mayoral job in Managua. End Summary.

A Strategic Alliance with the PLC?

¶2. (C) Montealegre suggested that reaching a common legislative agenda with the PLC is going to be very hard. Aleman is clearly not interested, in Montealegre's opinion. Montealegre discounted the supposed willingness voiced by certain PLC leaders, for example Maximino Rodriguez or Enrique Quinonez, to work with the ALN. Montealegre also doubts the power of lower level PLC politicians -- for example PLC mayors -- to effect change, since most of them are none too clean themselves, and Aleman can use his control of the Comptroller's Office to put pressure on them.

¶3. (C) Furthermore, Montealegre opined that in his view there was no goodwill in the PLC to work on a strategic liberal alliance with the ALN. Montealegre told the Ambassador that the PLC thus far has shown no interest in discussing the nitty-gritty details of a common legislative agenda. Therefore, Montealegre believes that the only way to move forward in developing liberal unity in Nicaragua is to work with the PLC on one specific issue at a time. The first such issue needs to be fighting the Ortega government's efforts to establish Consejos del Poder Ciudadano.

¶4. (C) Montealegre also doubts that it will be easy to create a common slate of candidates for the municipal elections next year. A full blown primary would be difficult to organize, expensive, and not necessary. The ALN and PLC

are evenly matched in only about 27 municipalities, and in the others municipalities it should be easy to decide which party should take the lead. Montealegre argued that the ALN and PLC would do better to follow the Mexican PRI example of internal weighted polls to pick common candidates in those municipalities where neither party enjoys a significant advantage.

Threats to Nicaraguan Democracy

15. (C) The CPCs pose a real threat to democracy, according to Montealegre. Rosario Murillo is seeking to use these Consejos first and foremost to secure control over the FSLN; but clearly the larger intent is to use the CPCs to circumvent municipal authorities. Even if the Assembly gets rid of the Ley 290, Ortega/Murillo will continue to develop the Consejos as overtly partisan organizations. Montealegre discounts that Ortega is primarily seeking to establish the CPCs in order to offset a possible loss of Presidential power if the Ley Marco is repealed. According to Montealegre, Ortega does not have much to fear if the Ley Marco is set aside; unlike President Bolanos who controlled only 5 Assembly votes, Ortega, with his 47 votes, will lose little power if the withdrawal of the Ley Marco comes to pass.

16. (C) Montealegre told us that the Assembly leadership's decision to move the Bolanos Davis case to the Supreme Court embodied a deal between Aleman and the FSLN to protect Aleman from an Assembly vote that could have gone against him, highlighting divisions within the PLC. Moving the case to the Supreme Court puts the Bolanos Davis case squarely in the hands of the Pacto. Having circumvented the will of the Assembly on this case, by referring it to the Court, the Pacto may try to utilize the same tactic for other issues.

17. (C) Continued funding for the democratic forces in Nicaragua is a real challenge, Montealegre told the Ambassador. He argues that he's not talking about a lot of money - \$100k a month is all that is needed - but if young entrepreneurs and others with a stake in protecting Nicaraguan democracy are not willing to contribute to the effort, he wonders how long he personally should continue to do so. Montealegre also fears that the Sandinistas will try to attack his assets, and so he has transferred much of his wealth to his wife. "I'd rather be ripped-off by my wife than by the FSLN," he joked. The private sector has not yet reacted to Ortega's politics because, so far, Ortega has not threatened them. The private sector would only react, Montealegre opined, as they did during the Somoza regime, when Ortega begins to directly compete with them and impinge on their profit making.

18. (C) Montealegre also voiced his concerns about the recent suicide of the wife of the Director of the Central Bank. The Central Bank Director has been one of the few rallying points for economic pragmatism, and Montealegre feared what the effect of this tragedy will be. If there was no foul play, the man will likely be devastated and distracted for some time. If there was foul play, and the Pacto has connived to cover it up, then the Pacto will now own the Central Bank too.

Mr. Mayor?

19. (C) The Ambassador asked whether rumors are true that Montealegre is thinking about standing as the mayoral candidate in Managua in the municipal elections next year. Montealegre said that he had not yet made this difficult decision. On one hand, the mayor's job is an important political platform in Nicaragua, especially since 25 percent of the nation's voters live in Managua. On the other hand, if he won, the pressures of the job would distract him from other political work, and there is a strong possibility that the Pacto would intentionally obstruct all of his efforts in order to discredit his leadership. Montealegre also fears that the PLC is pushing the Managua candidacy on him with the

full intent to double cross him: Aleman would name a deputy mayoral candidate and then right before the elections would reinvigorate the CENI accusations, seeking to discredit Montealegre, forcing him to renounce his candidacy, and thus allowing the PLC deputy mayoral candidate to move up into the lead slot.

Comment

¶10. (C) Montealegre has not yet lost the political bug, and has not decided against running for Mayor of Managua next year. However, his financial fatigue of supporting the ALN is almost surely genuine.

¶11. (C) Comment continued. We agree with Montealegre that the fight in the Assembly over the Consejos del Poder Ciudadano will be a critical. If the PLC and ALN can successfully work together to fight the Ortega government on this issue, the prospects for a strategic liberal alliance before the November 2008 elections will be strengthened. If the PLC and ALN can not hold together in an effort to change the Ley 290 and remove the enabling language for the CPCs, it is hard to imagine how they could form a wider alliance to defeat the FSLN in the municipal elections.

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